The purpose of Best Start LA is to optimize the social, emotional, cognitive, language, physical and motor development of Los Angeles County’s youngest children within the context of the multiple environments that affect their development:

- Pregnancy
- Nurturing Relationships
- Family
- Early Child Care and Education
- Early Intervention
- Neighborhoods and Communities

Best Start LA will have a focused impact at both the community and county level. The initial investment will support five Best Start demonstration communities and countywide capacity building strategies for the prenatal through three-year-old population and their families. Best Start LA is a long-term vision for First 5 LA.

**Preparing Communities to Offer Families the Best Start**

Capacity strengthening is the foundation for all aspects of Best Start LA, and must be addressed in order for First 5 LA and its Best Start partner communities to meet desired outcomes and results.

**Capacity strengthening strategies to include:**
- Leadership Development
- Leveraging and Partnerships
- Building Public and Political Will
- Workforce Development
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Data Improvement
- Policy Change and Development

**The Family Experience**

Best Start LA reflects a paradigm shift from targeting families for direct services to engaging families in their role as the most critical developmental environment for young children, from the in utero stage through the toddler years. In addition to their role as the most significant environment for young children, families are key catalysts in molding and transforming the broader environments experienced by their children. Best Start LA will work in partnership with families, along with all other stakeholders, to prioritize and develop solutions for transforming communities into pregnancy-, baby- and toddler-friendly environments.

**About First 5 LA**

First 5 LA is part of a group of unique child-advocacy organizations created by California voters to invest tobacco tax revenues in programs for improving the lives of children in L.A. County, from prenatal through age 5. First 5 LA champions health, education and safety causes concerning young children and families.

Since 1998, we have invested an estimated more than $560 million in grants and programs to champion the health, education, and safety causes concerning young children and families. Our vision is to create a future throughout our communities where all young children are born healthy and raised in a loving and nurturing environment so that they grow up healthy, are eager to learn, and reach their full potential.
Welcome, Baby!

As a way of introducing families to the wide range of services within a Best Start LA community, a registered nurse or community health worker will conduct a series of prenatal, hospital, and home visits to all new parents in the area. These voluntary Welcome, Baby! visits will provide new parents with important information about their child’s development as well as informing them about available community resources.

Through the activities of the Welcome, Baby! program, families will be connected to community-based supports, resulting in:

- An increase in the initiation and duration of breastfeeding
- Broader access to and use of appropriate health and development care
- A strengthened connection to resources and services in their community

Activities for Families Within Their Communities

- Play Environments for Children
- Family Education and Supportive Services
- Resource Center and an “Interactive” Baby Registry (allowing families to get personalized information about their child’s development)
  - Information and Guidance on Developmental Screenings
  - Community Resource Connections and Linkages (to assist families with specific needs)
  - Volunteer, Leadership and Organizational Development

Families Working Together to Improve Communities

- Activities providing an opportunity to build on the strengths within communities through innovative strategies that affect the various environments that impact children, including improvements to built environments, local resources and policies

In order to successfully implement this comprehensive, multi-layered approach, First 5 LA’s Best Start LA investment seeks to build upon and leverage existing community strengths and assets, fill gaps as appropriate and encourage a policy agenda with countywide and community-based aspects that will allow First 5 LA to take a strong leadership role in creating universal change in the ways that families with pregnant women, babies and toddlers are supported.